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ODONTOPHORUS GUIANENSIS MARMORATUS *Gould*. (*Upper figure*.)

ODONTOPHORUS GUIANENSIS GUIANENSIS *Gmelin*. (*Middle figure*.)

ODONTOPHORUS GUIANENSIS CANESCENS *Osgood and Conover*. (*Lower figure*.)



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FROM  
NORTHWESTERN VENEZUELA

BY

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## GAME BIRDS FROM NORTHWESTERN VENEZUELA

BY WILFRED H. OSGOOD AND BOARDMAN CONOVER

In the spring of 1920, the authors made a somewhat hurried trip to northwestern Venezuela making general collections of birds and mammals. Particular attention was given to game birds, especially by the junior author, and, although the collection is not a large one, it has seemed desirable to make report upon it. The groups included as game birds are the ducks, rails, shorebirds, gallinaceous birds, tinamous and pigeons. Specimens collected in 1910 by the senior author also have been listed, as well as certain others from the same region all contained in the collections of the Field Museum of Natural History.

Landing at Maracaibo on Feb. 8, we had one day's collecting near Atagracia, on the east side of the lake and nearly opposite the city of Maracaibo, and then proceeded south along the lake shore about 60 miles to a point called Iguana. Thence we went inland for about 40 miles directly west to the foot of the Sierra Perijá. In this region we collected from two bases, the first at the camp of the Caribbean Oil Co. called La Luna and the second some eight or ten miles farther south at the point where the Rio Cogollo emerges from the mountains. Returning to Maracaibo, we then went by steamer to La Ceiba at the south end of the lake, whence a short railroad took us to Motatan and an automobile stage to Valera. After a few days' collecting in the vicinity of Valera, three long days with saddle and pack mules brought us to Merida. From this base excursions were made to several localities in the surrounding mountains, following which return to Lake Maracaibo was made over a trail leading through Ejido, Jaji, and La Azulita to Santa Elena on the lower Rio Guachi which was descended with canoes to the mouth, where a small sailboat was secured for the return to Maracaibo. Later, a few days were spent at the village of Lagunillas on the east side of the lake some 50 miles from the city of Maracaibo.

The climatic and physical features of the region surrounding Lake Maracaibo are of extreme interest and it would be difficult to find a locality where so many varying conditions can be encountered in such close juxtaposition. Deserts, savannas, semi-arid forests, heavy humid forests, littoral swamps and estuaries, subtropical forests, temperate forests, and cold, treeless paramos all are accessible within a radius of one hundred miles. Intelligent study of the distribution and relationships of the animal life of this complicated region is practically im-

possible without a knowledge of physical conditions. Hence, although the subjoined list is limited to a small part of the avifauna, it seems necessary to devote some space to a brief description of the principal physiographic features of the region.

The country around the north end of Lake Maracaibo from the Caribbæan shores on both sides of the Gulf of Venezuela south nearly to the head of the lake, west to the base of the Sierra Perijá and eastward indefinitely is in an arid division of the Tropical Zone continuous with and probably to a large extent identical in character with what Chapman has called the Caribbæan Fauna. It consists of three well-defined subdivisions which may be called arid, semi-arid, and savanna. The *arid subdivision* extends from the Caribbæan coast south on both sides of the lake to points about 40 miles south of the city of Maracaibo. Within it the soil is sandy and the growth is principally *divi divi*, cactus, and light scrub. In general it resembles rather closely the conditions found on the island of Curacao. The *semi-arid subdivision* occupies both sides of the lake to the southward and is somewhat transitional in character between the arid subdivision and the humid tropical which is characteristic of the south end of the lake. It consists of light open forest of fairly large trees in which the lofty *Ceiba* takes a conspicuous place. Some twenty miles back from the lake shore it is replaced by the savanna subdivision but reappears again along the base and on the lower slopes of the Sierra Perijá. The *savanna subdivision*, eight to fifteen miles in width, roughly parallels the lake shore and the Sierra. On the east side of the lake similar savanna occupies the higher ground back from the lake and extends south to the vicinity of Mendoza, south-east of La Ceiba.

The southwest corner of the lake and the whole southern end is humid tropical. A broad flat plain, traversed by numerous rivers and containing many cienegas and large lagoons, extends back from the lake to the base of the mountains. This is heavily forested except about certain estuaries where there are extensive open swamps of *Heliconias*, rushes, and grasses. In many parts of this area the trees are of immense size and the general growth reaches a luxuriance seldom, if ever, exceeded. Such growth was observed along the Rio Catatumbo, Rio Zulia, and Rio Guachi and doubtless is characteristic of the whole region. With some modification it reaches upward along watercourses far into the canyons of the mountains. Along those rivers which descend directly from the mountains it continues upward to meet the temperate forest. In other cases, where larger rivers have broken through or passed around the main mountain wall, the humid

character of the forest changes to semi-arid or arid, and isolated pockets of this character of considerable extent may thus occur. Such pockets were noted especially along the Rio Chama below Merida and along the Rio Motatan between Valera and Timotes; another occurs in the vicinity of San Jose de Cucuta, Colombia. The mountains rise abruptly from the alluvial plain, especially to the eastward of the mouth of the Rio Chama, and reach such heights that they support an extensive paramo fauna and very large areas of temperate zone forest. From a "knot" between the sources of the Rio Chama and the Rio Motatan they extend in three principal chains: (1) La Culata, or northern Sierra, which lies northeast of the city of Merida and parallels the upper Rio Chama; (2) the Sierra Nevada, or southern Sierra, which has a corresponding position on the south of Merida and extends westward and southwestward to the vicinity of the 72nd Meridian, somewhat to the eastward of the town of San Cristobal; (3) the Cordillera of Trujillo, or northeastern Sierra, which lies south and east of the upper Rio Motatan and reaches nearly to the 70th Meridian. These mountain chains maintain a minimum elevation of 9000-10000 ft., and individual peaks reach a height of nearly or quite 15000 ft. They break down to some extent in the vicinity of San Cristobal and, although the exact conditions have not been worked out, it seems probable that between the western sources of the Rio Uribante and the eastern tributaries of the Rio Zulia opportunity is afforded for the passage of the subtropical fauna of the East Andean and Orinocan regions to the Maracaibo basin, thus completely isolating the Merida temperate zone from that of the Paramo de Tama and Bogota.

Following are the localities from which specimens are recorded:\*

*Altigracia, February 10, 1920.* Eastern shore of Lake Maracaibo nearly opposite the city of Maracaibo in the arid region of cactus and divi divi. Sea level.

*Rio Aurare, January 17-24, 1910.* About twelve miles southeast of Altigracia, in the arid region, but adjacent to various swamps, cienegas, and "manglars." Sea level.

*La Azulita, April 21-29, 1920.* A village on the west side of the Rio Guachi in the foothills overlooking the plain at the south end of Lake Maracaibo. Some of the surrounding country is cleared for the production of sugar and coffee, but most of it is heavily forested. Conditions are humid tropical or subtropical. Elevation 3500 ft.

\*For more detailed descriptions of localities of collections made in 1910, see Osgood, Field Mus. Nat. Hist. Pubs., Zool., X, pp. 36-38, 1912.

*La Ceiba, March 18, 1908.* A port near the southeastern corner of Lake Maracaibo. The humid tropical forest of the south end of the lake shows signs of attenuation here and evidently does not continue much farther north. Small collections were made here by Dr. N. Dearborn. Sea level.

*Rio Chama, April 4-7, 1920.* Specimens labeled Rio Chama are from Hacienda Santa Catalina near the south bank of the Chama and about 10 miles southwest of the city of Merida. Conditions are subtropical with open forest alternating with cleared fields and coffee plantations. Elevation 4500 ft.

*Rio Cogollo, February 13-March 1, 1920.* The Rio Cogollo is the northernmost tributary of the Rio Apon which rises in the Sierra Perijá and flows into Lake Maracaibo, some 60 miles south of Maracaibo. Collecting was done from two camps, one on the river just below the point where it issues through narrow canyons from the mountains and the other some 10 miles north at the abandoned oil camp known as La Luna. Light semi-arid tropical forest characterizes the region and open grassy savanna occurs within 10 miles. Elevation 350 ft.

*Empalado Savanna, April 6-14, 1910.* Near the source of the Rio Aurare some 30 miles east of Maracaibo. A region of light scattered forest and open grassy savannas.

*Encontrados, February 10-27, 1908.* A small town at the head of steam navigation on the Rio Catatumbo in the humid tropical plain southwest of Lake Maracaibo. Specimens noted from this locality were collected by N. Dearborn and M. P. Anderson.

*Rio Guachi, May 1-3, 1920.* The Rio Guachi rises on the northern slopes of the northern Sierra and flows slightly west of north and empties into the southern end of Lake Maracaibo some 12 miles east of the mouth of the Rio Chama. Collections were made at the mouth of the river and at a station called Santa Elena at the head of canoe navigation some 20 miles above the mouth. Both localities are in the alluvial plain characterized by heavy humid tropical forest.

*El Guayabal, March 12-17, 1910.* A station about 10 miles north of San Jose de Cucuta, Colombia. Conditions are semi-arid and tropical. Elevation 1000 ft.

*Lagunillas, Zulía, May 8-10, 1920.* A village on the eastern shore of Lake Maracaibo about midway of its length. Behind the village

is a very extensive shallow lagoon or cienega filled with water plants and bordered by rushes and mangroves. The surrounding country is arid or semi-arid. Sea level.

*Lagunillas, Merida.* A village on the Rio Chama about 20 miles west of Merida. A small lagoon nearby furnishes a habitat for water birds. Conditions are arid and tropical. Specimens from this locality have been sent to various museums by Briceño Gabaldon and Sons. Elevation 3200 ft.

*Merida.* The city of Merida is situated on a mesa between the Rio Chama and one of its smaller tributaries, the Rio Albaregas. In the river valleys conditions are tropical or subtropical, but mountains rise abruptly on either side and temperate forests are accessible within a few hours travel. Elevation 4960 ft.

*Rio Mucujon, March 20-29, 1920.* A small stream rising in the Culata or northern Sierra and emptying into the Rio Chama just above the city of Merida. Collections were made principally in a temperate zone forest at about 9000 ft. altitude on the side of the Paramo San Antonio. Excursions upward were made to an elevation of 12300 ft.

*Orope, March 1-13, 1908.* A station near the Rio Zulia about 35 miles south of Encontrados. It is in the heart of the humid tropical forest where its conditions are developed to the highest degree. Visited by Dr. Dearborn in 1908.

*Paramo de Tama, February 10-March 6, 1910.* A mountain mass at the head of the Tachira River on the boundary between Colombia and Venezuela. It supports a magnificent temperate zone forest, but although the summit of the principal peak is without timber, a paramo fauna finds but precarious foothold. Collections are mostly from an altitude of about 8000 ft.

*Paramo Tambor, April 14-19, 1920.* A mountain near the western end of the Culata or northern Sierra. It lies nearly west of Merida and just northwest of the village of Jaji. Collections are from its northeastern slopes near the headwaters of a western branch of the Rio Guachi at a hacienda known as *La Carbonera*. Temperate forest and open cleared meadows prevail. Altitude 7000 ft.

*Colon, Tachira, November 6-24, 1913.* A village, more fully called San Juan de Colon, in the subtropical region overlooking the Maracaibo plain. Altitude 2300 ft. Collections were made here by M. P. Anderson in 1913.

*Sierra Nevada de Merida, April 8-10, 1920.* The Sierra Nevada was visited at a point southeast of Merida on the side of a very steep mountain slope near the head of a small southern tributary of the Rio Chama, known as the Rio Fria. Heavy temperate zone forest prevails. Altitude 7500 ft.

**Tinamus tao septentrionalis** Brabourne & Chubb.

La Azulita, 1.

The bird taken is a male and much smaller than a female from Maracay, Aragua, Venezuela in the Field Museum. The male specimen measures, wing, 255; tarsus, 74.5; against wing, 285; tarsus, 83 mm., for the female, and is more olivaceous on the back. The male, taken April 29th, had enlarged gonads.

This tinamou was abundant in the heavy woods near La Azulita, as indicated by the calls heard, but it was very hard to secure. The natives said it could be called up, but the only time we saw this tried, the birds would not approach closely enough to be seen, although they kept answering. It feeds on the ground and, when certain trees are bearing, gathers in large numbers in favorable places. Natives state also that it lays from four to six eggs in hollows on the ground. It roosts in trees at night. A piece of broken egg shell seen by the authors was very nearly robin's egg blue. According to our own experience with the bird it appears to favor brushy places in the woods when not out feeding. In escaping it prefers to use its legs as is the case with most of the tinamous, and is very adept at sneaking quietly away through the woods.

Local name, *Gallineta*.

**Tinamus major zuliensis** subsp. nov.

*Type* from Rio Cogollo, District of Perijà, State of Zulia, Venezuela. Elevation 350 ft. Adult male, in Field Museum of Natural History (Conover Collection). Collected Feb. 21, 1920 by W. H. Osgood and Boardman Conover. Orig. No. 3485.

*Characters.* Adult male: Similar to *T. m. ruficeps* but upperparts paler, more olivaceous; upperparts and inner wing quills with fewer and narrower dark bars. Occipital crest small; forehead and crown mahogany red indistinctly barred with black; upperparts brownish olive irregularly barred with black on the middle and lower back. Upper wing coverts light brownish olive, barred with narrow and incomplete black bars; primaries blackish brown; secondaries lighter,



with the greater part of the outer web Prout's brown finely mottled with blackish; irregular small buffy spots on outer edges of secondaries and upper wing coverts. Upper tail coverts brownish olive, tipped with buff and narrowly barred with black. Throat white; sides of head and neck all around buff, each feather with a fine black tip. Underparts mostly grayish olive lightly vermiculated with dusky; flanks barred with blackish; under tail coverts barred ochraceous buff and grayish brown. Wing, 237; culmen, 32; tarsus, 63; middle toe with claw, 38.5.

This form differs from *T. m. ruficeps*, as represented by a specimen from La Murelia, Caquetà, Colombia, loaned by Dr. Chapman, in the general olivaceous rather than rufescent coloration of the upperparts, in the practically unbarred condition of the secondaries, the much narrower bars of the back, rump, and wing coverts, and in the paler facial and nuchal regions. In the reduced barring of the upperparts, it seems closer to typical *major* of Guiana than it does to *ruficeps*. In *major*, however, there is even less barring, the coloration is distinctly rufescent, and the forehead is blackish.

A specimen from Cacagualito, Santa Marta, Colombia (No. 71457 Am. Mus. Nat. Hist.) agrees closely with the type of *zuliensis*, merely being somewhat lighter and less vermiculated on the underparts. Hence it is probable that the new form occupies the semi-arid districts of eastern Colombia and western Venezuela in the region from which so many other subspecific forms have been recognized.

This tinamou was abundant in the forest at the base of the Sierra Perijá near the Rio Cogollo. It seemed to be much wilder than the other species of this district, being much more apt to flush, although generally trusting to its legs. When it did fly it left the ground with a roar of wings like a ruffed grouse, going at breakneck speed in a straight line through the woods.

### *Crypturornis\* cerviniventris* Sclater & Salvin.

La Azulita, 1.

As only one specimen of this species, and that an imperfect one (Sclat. & Salv. P.Z.S., 1873, p. 512, Lake Valencia, Venezuela), is known, it seems best to give below a description of our bird, which appears referable to it.

Adult male: Very similar to *C. obsoletus*, but much darker and smaller. Feathers of the head and neck with dissociated barbules producing a hairy or powdery effect. Color of the head and neck

\*Oberholser, Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash., Vol. 35, p. 74, Mch. 20, 1922.

mouse gray, becoming dark mouse gray on the hind neck; a slight buffy tinge to the edges of some of the feathers of the crown. Upperparts and lower fore neck chestnut brown with traces of vermiculations; upper breast chestnut brown, shading into vinaceous buff on the lower abdomen; feathers of the flanks and abdomen with dusky brown bars, the tips vinaceous buff; under tail coverts heavily barred with dusky brown, the tips vinaceous buffy. Primaries hair brown, the outer edges of the outer webs showing a brownish tinge; secondaries hair brown with outer webs and tips broadly margined with chestnut brown. Wing, 143; culmen, 23; tarsus, 40; middle toe with nail, 36.

This tinamou was seen only at La Azulita where a male bird was flushed from a nest on April 21st. The nest was simply a hollow between the roots of a small tree in the deep woods, and contained three fresh eggs, of a deep pink color. Unfortunately through a mishap these eggs were lost.

Many times in the next week the whistling call of this bird was heard, so it is probably fairly common, but very hard to secure because of its secretive habits. The only other species of tinamou inhabiting this district was *Tinamus tao septentrionalis*, which was also very difficult to secure, although its call was heard every day.

Local name, *Suida*.

### **Crypturornis soui** subsp.?

Rio Cogollo, 1.

A tinamou of the *soui* series in immature plumage with pale tips to the upper wing and tail coverts was taken on the Rio Cogollo Feb. 23rd. Several others were seen on the same day, but at no other time. These birds were found in a mass of brush and vines which they refused to leave. They seemed more inclined to flush than the larger species, but would pitch again into the brush after a few yards. It was almost impossible to secure them without damaging the specimen badly.

### **Crypturornis noctivagus spencei** Chubb.

Rio Cogollo, 3.

These specimens are provisionally referred to *C. n. spencei* (Bull. Brit. Orn. Club, Vol. 38, p. 29, 1917) although no material has been available from the vicinity of Caracas, the type locality of that form. In comparison with *C. n. noctivagus* of Brazil, *C. n. dissimilis* of Guiana, and *C. n. cinnamomeus* of Central America, they are much paler in general coloration, the breast being buffy instead of tawny

and the forehead being only slightly darker than the crown. The throat is white, the lower foreneck gray washed with buff, the upper breast and sides wood brown to buffy brown, becoming ochraceous buff in middle of breast, and the middle of the abdomen is whitish. The mantle is cinnamon brown to Mars brown with slight traces of darker vermiculations posteriorly; the lower back is cinnamon brown lightly barred with dusky and the upper tail coverts are broadly and distinctly barred with blackish brown and light ochraceous buff.

In allocating this form as a subspecies of *C. noctivagus* some assumption is necessary, for the available material leaves much to be desired. *C. noctivagus* is represented in the Field Museum by a specimen from Macaco Secco, near Andarahy, Bahia, Brazil; *C. n. dissimilis* is represented by two adults from Corentyne River, British Guiana; *C. n. cinnamomeus* by four from Chinandega, Nicaragua; and *C. n. goldmani* by three from Yucatan. These forms, as thus represented, are closely related and differ from each other only by such characters as usually prove to be subspecific. Moreover, it is indubitable that practical continuity of range exists. Between assumptions, therefore, we prefer that which is supported by the larger element of probability and the one that tends to clarify rather than obscure relationships in a group as yet imperfectly understood. Other forms, perhaps belonging to the same series, but of which we have seen no specimens, are *C. strigulosus* and *C. erythropus*. The latter may prove to be closer to *spencei* than either *dissimilis* or *cinnamomeus*, but the original description indicates that the barring on the wing coverts is much less developed and the colored plate given by Salvadori (Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus., XXVII, pl. X, 1895), if at all reliable, indicates that *erythropus* is a bird much darker and more richly colored than the one here referred to *spencei*.

This tinamou was fairly common in the forest near the Rio Cogollo. Here the foliage was quite thin near the ground and it was possible to watch the tactics employed by individual birds in sneaking out of range. They did not run or flush, even when encountered within a few yards, but stood watching the intruder for a moment and then ducked their heads under the nearest vine and, keeping as near a crouching position as possible, glided away on a zigzag course until out of sight. A female shot Feb. 21, contained a fully developed egg which was preserved. Its color is light pinkish.

***Odontophorus guianensis canescens* subsp. nov.**

*Type* from Rio Cogollo, District of Perijá, State of Zulia, Vene-

zuela. Elevation 350 ft. Adult male in Field Museum of Natural History (Conover Collection). Collected Feb. 25, 1920 by W. H. Osgood and Boardman Conover. Orig. No. 3494.

*Characters.* Adult Male: Similar to *O. g. marmoratus*, but mantle paler and more grayish; ear coverts and sides of neck more rusty; underparts more heavily mottled with black and buffy, the markings taking the form of broadly sagittate spots rather than irregular bars; forehead, chin, and sides of throat paler, the last definitely flecked with white. Similar to *O. g. guianensis*, but having chestnut ear coverts instead of buffy ochraceous and differing also in the paler throat and mantle. Hind neck and interscapular region gray finely barred and mottled with black; forehead, crown, and crest brownish chestnut, the feathers of the forehead with whitish buff centers; sides of head rufescent, the ear coverts dark chestnut; lower back and rump light clay color becoming slightly darker on upper tail coverts, numerous feathers with ochraceous tips and prominent subapical, sagittate black spots; barring on outer webs of primaries light whitish buff; edges of inner webs of scapulars ochraceous buff; chin dirty white; throat light gray, each feather with a broad whitish bar near the tip giving a white-dotted appearance which extends to the maxillary region; lower foreneck gray mottled with dusky; rest of underparts light chestnut with generally distributed sagittate, black and buff spots.

*Remarks.* This bird is distinguished from both *O. g. marmoratus* and *O. g. guianensis* by the gray hind neck and mantle, the white spotting on the throat, and the extensive mottling of the underparts. By the dark color of its ear coverts it seems to show closer affinity to *marmoratus* than to *guianensis*, but in other respects it differs more from either of these forms than they do from each other. A male specimen from Puerto Valdivia, Colombia, kindly loaned by Dr. F. M. Chapman, has been regarded as representative of *marmoratus*.

The type of this new form was the only specimen of its kind taken. It was found in company with its mate, or another bird of the same species, squatting in thick brush and was shot at close range but fortunately was recovered in excellent condition. According to native reports, the species is not common.

Native names, *Perdiz colorado*, *Gallito*.

### *Crax daubentoni* Gray.

Rio Cogollo, 1.

The only specimen preserved is a female which differs from descrip-

tions in having the crest feathers white except for a black tip and narrow black base.

In the Rio Cogollo region this species was very plentiful, a number being killed, and many more seen. They spend the greater part of their time on the ground, and seem to prefer to trust to their legs rather than their wings in escaping. If come upon suddenly they will flush into trees, where by quiet approach a shot can generally be obtained. The male birds appear to be solitary and much wilder than the hens, which were seen in flocks of from three to six. According to the natives they lay two eggs and build their nests in tall trees.

At an isolated water hole near Lagunillas, a male and two females of this species were watched as they came to drink. They approached with extreme caution, stopping frequently, craning their necks, and looking about alertly. The male, especially, had a very stately appearance and at a distance of a hundred yards, as seen through a light network of slender vines and scraggly bushes, was a very conspicuous object. On arriving at the bank of the pool, first one bird and then another would essay a few feet down the open bank and then suddenly turn and rush back to the cover. Finally when one had become bold enough to proceed entirely to the waters' edge, the others joined it and all remained there drinking and walking about for some ten minutes.

Local name, *Paujil*.

### **Pauxi pauxi** Linnaeus.

La Azulita, 1.

Found only at La Azulita, where a male was secured. Here also a native brought in two tame birds, which he claimed to have raised from chicks.

These curassows appear to prefer the steep sides of forested mountains in country which the natives call "muy pendiente." Although hard to obtain, they were abundant in certain localities, their characteristic call being heard whenever we travelled far into the woods. This call was a deep moaning "Oom, Oom", which carried great distances. Several times on hearing the call an attempt was made to obtain a shot only to find after travelling some distance that the birds were still far down the mountainside. From the edge of a steep canyon one morning this moaning call was heard coming up from near the bottom more than five hundred feet below. A short distance below the crest a single bird was luckily encountered feeding in a little side

ravine near the top of the canyon. It first made itself known by starting a scolding cackle very similar to that of the common guinea fowl. On being approached, it flew up into a low tree, where it sat scolding and presenting an easy mark.

According to native hunters, these curassows lay two eggs, building their nests in clumps of hanging vines or low trees.

Local name, *Paujil*.

### **Penelope montagni** Bonaparte.

Rio Mucujon, 3; Paramo de Tama, 2.

This temperate zone species is found in both Colombia and Venezuela, two specimens from the Paramo de Tama being identical with the three from the Rio Mucujon. It was seen only at the Rio Mucujon, where we found it at eight to ten thousand feet elevation. However, on the other side of the Chama Valley in the Sierra Nevada at an elevation of about 7500 feet, its call was heard several times.

These guans do not appear to wander much during the day, but stay near certain favorite feeding places. The native hunters know these localities, and on arriving at them imitate the whistling call of the bird. If any are in the neighborhood they will immediately answer. If one remained quiet the birds' curiosity would generally get the better of them and a shot would be obtained. Sometimes when approached they would become suspicious and change their call to a sharp scolding.

The flesh of this bird was generally excellent, although not always so. Probably, as in all birds of this class, their food at the time has a great deal to do with the matter.

Local name, *Pava*.

### **Penelope cristata** Linnaeus.

Rio Cogollo, 1; Rio Guachi, 1.

We refer to this species two specimens from the tropical zone around Lake Maracaibo. Only one specimen of *P. cristata*, and that from Costa Rica, was available for comparison, but our birds do not seem to differ from it in any great respect.

This species was abundant in the vicinity of the Rio Cogollo and also at the mouth of the Rio Guachi, although the former is in a relatively arid region and the latter in a very humid one. They are noisy birds, uttering their scolding cry when alarmed or excited, but

are rather shy of a close approach, which may be because of their being much hunted.

Local name, *Pava paujil* or *Pava*.

***Penelope argyrotis* Bonaparte.**

La Azulita, 3.

Found only at La Azulita where it appeared to be abundant. These guans were found in pairs in late April, probably just starting to mate. They are noisy birds as are all guans. On hearing or catching a glimpse of anything strange, they would begin their noisy, scolding chatter. These birds were very hard to make out sitting in the trees, but generally after a short time exposed themselves by moving slightly or perhaps flying to the next tree.

Local name, *Pava*.

***Ortalis ruficrissa baliolus* subsp. nov.**

*Type* from Orope, State of Zulia, Venezuela. No. 34399 Field Museum of Natural History. Adult male. Collected March 12, 1908, by Ned Dearborn. Orig. No. 600.

*Characters.* Adult male: Similar to *O. r. ruficrissa* of Colombia, but larger and with general coloration darker and much more rufescent, especially on the underparts from the lower breast to the crissum. Compared with a specimen of *O. r. ruficrissa* from Dibulla, Sta. Marta, Colombia, kindly loaned by Mr. W. E. C. Todd, of Pittsburgh, the crown of the head is darker gray, the lower breast, belly, flanks and thighs darker olive, with a heavy wash of rufous, and the crissum and under tail coverts are much darker rufous chestnut. Wing, 220; tail, 263; exposed culmen, 27; tarsus, 71.5; middle toe with nail, 66.

Another adult male from Orope corresponds with the type, while a male specimen from the Rio Cogollo, which appears to be an immature bird, might be said to be intermediate between *O. r. ruficrissa*, and *O. r. baliolus*, except that in size it is much smaller than either, its wing measuring only 196. It is possible that mature birds from that region would not differ from the Orope ones. The new form is characterized principally by its heavily rufescent abdomen and surrounding parts. Its habitat is in a heavy humid forest, whereas typical *ruficrissa* is evidently confined to light arid or semi-arid forest.

These birds were common in the Tropical Zone, being seen in the vicinity of the Rio Cogollo, at the mouth of the Rio Guachi, and at Lagunillas. They were rather shy and secretive, seeming to lack the

curiosity of most of the guans. Whenever danger threatened, the guacharacas would slip off through the trees, or sit quietly in some dense growth where it was almost impossible to make them out.

Local name, *Guacharaca*.

**Aburria aburri** Lesson.

La Azulita, 1.

This bird was seen only near La Azulita, but at La Carbonera near the Paramo Tambor, the natives spoke of its being known in that vicinity. Its range probably lies between 2000 and 6000 feet. It was not reported by the natives at St. Helena, near the foot of the mountains, although the airline distance from there to La Azulita is probably not over ten miles. We find no previous record of its occurrence in Venezuela.

It was said to be very abundant near La Azulita at certain times of the year when special fruits ripen. From our brief observation and also from what could be gathered from native hunters, it appears that this bird is more or less nocturnal. On two different mornings we heard its call several hours before sunrise. The specimen taken was found in a tree about ten-thirty one morning and gave every evidence of being sound asleep. It is said to build its nest in trees.

Local name, *Gualí*.

**Colinus (Eupsychortyx) cristatus** Linnaeus.

Maracaibo, 2; Altigracia, 2; Rio Aurare, 5; Rio Cogollo, 3; Valera, 2.

These quail were abundant in suitable localities from sea level to 6000 feet. They were found throughout the arid region around Maracaibo, in the open arid forest, on the savannas around the Rio Cogollo, and in the coffee, sugar cane and corn fields at higher altitudes. Their habits and notes were very similar to those of our common Bob White (*Colinus virginianus*), but in the more uninhabited regions where little disturbed, they showed a tendency to tree when flushed.

The two specimens from Valera are intermediate between *Colinus c. cristatus* and *Colinus c. horvathi*. In the color of their upperparts they are nearer *horvathi* while on the underparts they resemble *cristatus*. In the valley of the Rio Motatan above Valera they were noted up to an altitude of 6000 ft., but this region is separated from the Chama valley, where *horvathi* is found, by very high mountains, so complete continuity of range is not probable.

Local name, *Perdiz*.



**Colinus (Eupsychortyx) cristatus horvathi** Von Madarasz.

Rio Chama, 4; Merida, 1.

Our specimens from the Rio Chama are much lighter on the underparts than the birds from the vicinity of Maracaibo. Their backs are much grayer with less rufescent tinge and their bills are much heavier. Two females have the throats buffy white, heavily spotted with black. However, one female of *cristatus* from Rio Cogollo has the throat brown conspicuously streaked with black.

In the vicinity of Merida these quail were found to inhabit the grassy lower slopes of the mountains, coming down to the corn and sugar cane fields to feed. On being disturbed they would immediately make for the hillsides.

Local name, *Perdiz*.

**Chloroenas rufina pallidicrissa** Chubb.

Rio Cogollo, 2; Encontrados, 2; Rio Aurare, 1.

This bird was common at the mouth of the Rio Guachi, and at Lagunillas, as well as on the Rio Cogollo. It was not seen in the mountains and seems to be a bird of the Tropical Zone. It frequents semi-wooded country, never being found in the heavy forest. On the Rio Cogollo it lived about the edges of the savanna. At Lagunillas it was found about clearings and was seen several times flying across the lake just a few feet above the water. The lake there was over a mile and a half wide, but even when taking an extended flight this pigeon seems not to prefer to rise high in the air. In the evenings it gathers in certain trees to roost at which time its calls are heard, but it is never very noisy.

The two specimens collected appear to be nearer *C. r. pallidicrissa* than *C. r. rufina*, but might fairly be called intermediate between the two.

**Chloroenas albilinea** Bonaparte.

Rio Mucujon, 3; Paramo Tambor, 3.

These pigeons were found in the Andes at elevations from 7000 to 10,000 feet. In suitable localities they were common, but rather shy. Food has a great deal to do with their abundance, and they are probably partially migratory in their search for it. Although arboreal and spending most of their time in the heavy forest they come into the clearings to feed. Near the Rio Mucujon they were found feeding in a brushy pasture on a species of berry and, from what the native hun-

ters said, they are very fond of wheat which they obtain in the stubble fields and about the threshing sheds.

On the Paramo Tambor they were even more plentiful than at the Rio Mucujon. Here where large clearings had been burnt off, high stubs were left scattered around and the ground was covered with a bush similar to our pokeweed. The torcazas would alight on these stubs to ascertain that no danger lurked before flying to the ground to feed on the seeds of this weed.

On April 14, at the Paramo Tambor an immature female was shot, so they must be nesting in that vicinity in March. This specimen is about a quarter smaller than the mature birds, has no sign of the white nape, and shows very little metallic greenish on the hind neck. The underparts are dark gray, the feathers being tipped with russet brown, which becomes darker on the chest.

Local name, *Torcaza*.

### **Oenoenas plumbea propinqua** Cory.

La Azulita, 1.

The one specimen obtained agrees with the type of *O. p. propinqua* from Peru in the color of the head and neck, but the tail is less purplish. In size it also agrees, the wing measuring 182. We find no records of the occurrence of any form of *plumbea* in Venezuela. This specimen therefore may extend the known range of the species.

Around La Azulita these pigeons were very common. They are strictly arboreal, spending all their time in the higher trees of the heavy forest. During the morning from sunrise until about ten, and in the afternoon from about four until dark the woods were ringing with the cooing of these pigeons. They were very difficult to see among the leaves, as on the slightest noise from the ground, the birds would stop calling and remain motionless. Time after time birds were heard, but before one got within range the calling would cease, and no amount of watching would locate them. It was exasperating to spend fifteen minutes under a tree and not be able to see any sign of life, only to have the calling commence as soon as you were a few hundred yards away. These pigeons probably secure all their food in the trees, never coming to the ground. The noise of particles of fruit or seeds dropped by feeding birds was frequently heard.

### **Oenoenas subvinacea zuliae** Cory.

Paramo Tambor, 4; La Azulita, 1; Orope, 1 (Type).

Found in the valley of the Rio Guachi from 3000 feet to 7000 feet.

The five specimens taken were compared with the type of *O. s. zuliae* and show no difference. One specimen, a female, taken at the Paramo Tambor on April 19th, appears to be an immature bird, having rusty tips to the flank feathers, and a wing measuring only 153 mm.

At the Paramo Tambor these pigeons had somewhat the same habits as *Zenaida ruficauda ruficauda*. They were never seen feeding in the open fields like *Zenaida*, but were found in small patches of bushes and trees in the clearings and along the bushy edges of the woods. They were not shy. At La Azulita only two birds of this species were seen. These were found sitting in some low trees in the woods. In this same district *O. plumbea propinqua* was very common, but had entirely different habits, living wholly in the tops of the highest trees.

Local name, *Lloma*.

#### *Zenaida ruficauda ruficauda* Bonaparte.

Paramo Tambor, 5; La Azulita, 1.

The large size of these specimens (wing, 142-151) has sufficed for their reference to this form which Chapman (Dist. Bird Life Col., p. 207) has determined as the temperate zone form of Colombia. They were found in cleared or unforested regions feeding in cleared fields or natural savannas and resting in small patches of brush. On the Paramo Tambor their favorite resort was a field of cultivated peas where they were found feeding daily. Specimens were taken from 3000 ft. elevation to 7000 ft. At the head of the Chama Valley near Mucuchies several birds were seen at an elevation of 10,000 ft. Their occurrence at La Azulita and Paramo Tambor, which are in naturally forested regions, is probably due to extensive artificial clearings.

#### *Zenaida ruficauda vinaceo-rufa* Ridgway.

Rio Cogollo, 2.

This form, described from Curacao and known from other islands off the northern coast of Venezuela, doubtless inhabits much of the adjacent mainland. We failed to see it in the vicinity of Maracaibo, however, and found it only on the open savannas near the Rio Cogollo. If any constant difference exists between island and mainland birds it is not sufficiently evident in our specimens to warrant separation. A male differs from males from Curacao in being slightly darker on the back and paler on the breast. A female has the underparts darker than in topotypical females. No comparison has been made with *Z. r. robinsoni* of the Magdalena Valley.

Ridgway (Birds N. and Mid. Am., VII, p. 371) includes Merida within the range of this form, perhaps on the basis of specimens from the arid tropical pocket near Ejido in the Chama Valley, where it is not improbable it may occur, although, if so, it is a case of discontinuous range. While crossing this part of the valley, we saw several birds of this genus but no specimens were obtained. At higher elevations near Merida, another form (*Z. r. ruficauda*) is found.

Local name, *Sabanera*.

***Scardafella ridgwayi* Richmond.**

Altagracia, 2; Maracaibo, 5; Rio Aurare, 2; Encontrados, 1.

This dove was seen only in the vicinity of the city of Maracaibo and directly across the lake at Altagracia, but in both places it was exceedingly abundant. In the city of Maracaibo it was commonly seen in the parks, where it appeared to have little fear of people. It seems to inhabit the same country, and have about the same habits as *Chaemepelia p. albivitta*, although *Scardafella* undoubtedly is more arboreal. Arid, more or less open country is what it likes, for in the region about the Rio Cogollo only 60 miles from Maracaibo it was not seen even in the savannas.

***Chaemepelia passerina albivitta* Bonaparte.**

Altagracia, 3; Rio Chama, 1.

Very common on both sides of the lake near the city of Maracaibo. It was not seen along the Rio Cogollo but seemed to stay more in the open sandy country along the coast. In this vicinity in February it was generally in small flocks. Near Merida only one bird of this species was seen. It was secured but does not seem to be different from the coast form.

***Chaemepelia rufipennis* Bonaparte.**

Rio Cogollo, 5; Rio Guachi, 1; Rio Chama, 7; Encontrados, 8; Orope, 2; Colon, Tachira, 5; Rio Aurare, 2.

This small dove was very numerous about the Rio Cogollo on the edge of the savanna and about openings or clearings in the semi-arid woods. It was seen also at Lagunillas in some numbers. Near the Rio Chama, just below Merida, it was numerous. In one field of corn stubble a large flock was seen every day feeding on small weed seeds.

***Claravis pretiosa* Ferrari-Perez.**

Rio Cogollo, 2; La Ceiba, 1; El Guayabal, Colombia, 1.

A partly terrestrial dove found in the semi-arid tropical forest. It was seen only occasionally near the Rio Cogollo and never in flocks. At a water hole near Lagunillas large numbers came with other doves to drink. A female specimen, otherwise normal, has the outermost primary only very slightly attenuated. Comparison with others seems to indicate that this is a character of immaturity.

**Leptotila verreauxi** Bonaparte.

Altigracia, 1; Lagunillas, 1; Rio Cogollo, 4; Valera, 2; Rio Chama, 1; Encontrados, 4; Rio Aurare, 1.

This ground pigeon was found from sea level up to 6000 feet along river valleys. It was very common in the semi-arid forests about the Rio Cogollo and Lagunillas. Late in the morning it would sit in the trees and call, but was difficult to locate. Nests and eggs were found near here Feb. 18. The nests were similar to those of the Mourning Dove. On the Rio Chama near Merida it was found generally in the coffee plantations. It was very shy, flushing quietly, just skimming the tops of the coffee bushes, alighting again within a hundred yards, and then running. It was found also in standing corn, but was never seen in corn stubbles. It evidently prefers cover and is shy of the open, although spending much time on the ground.

Local names, *Rabiblanca* and *Llorona*.

**Leptotila rufaxilla** Richard & Bernard.

St. Helena, Rio Guachi, 1; Orope, 2.

Found in the humid forest and adjoining clearings where it was often heard but seldom seen. It would sit cooing in some densethicket out of which it would quietly slip when an attempt was made to enter. On the upper Rio Guachi (7000 ft.) *Leptotila* were seen which perhaps belonged to this species.

**Oreopeleia violacea** Temminck & Knip.

La Azulita, 1.

On April 25th a male was shot from its nest, which was placed about seven feet above the ground in a small bush, near a trail in the dense woods. The nest contained two fresh eggs of a light buff color.

This bird agrees closely with a specimen from the Paria Peninsula, Venezuela, kindly lent us by Dr. Chapman.

**Oreopeleia montana** Linnaeus.

La Azulita, 3.

Three specimens of this quail dove were taken, two females and

an immature male. Compared with measurements given by Ridgway in his "Birds of North and Middle America," these specimens average small, the wings of the two females being 126-131 and the male 130. The species was only found near La Azulita at an elevation of about 3200 ft. It inhabited the dense woods, and was very shy. The immature male, which appeared just to have left the nest, was killed April 22nd. The habits are about the same as those of the large quail dove *Oreopeleia linearis* of the temperate forest.

***Oreopeleia linearis* Provost & Knip.**

Rio Mucujon, 4; Sierra de Merida, 1; Paramo Tambor, 1; Paramo de Tama, 1.

We must agree with Chapman in not considering *venezuelensis* a valid subspecies, as three of our specimens certainly could not be said to have the gray of the head restricted to the sides, and two of these birds were taken within twenty-five miles of Merida, the type locality of *venezuelensis*.

These quail doves live in the dense woods, where they can be heard cooing morning and evening. They breed in March and April and the males at that time seem very pugnacious. Some of the natives are very expert at calling them, but they are so shy that if they see the least movement, or hear any unusual noise, they will slip quickly away. In one instance, a bird, coming to the call, was seen about twenty yards off strutting and circling about exactly in the manner of a domestic pigeon when courting its mate. When calling, the cocks generally sit in a low tree or bush, but they will also answer from the ground when coming to an imitation. Although no hens were shot, an experience we had seems to indicate that they are more or less silent when coming to the call of the male. We had stopped at a favorite place one morning and the native had been calling for some time without receiving an answer. Suddenly, a bird came into sight not fifteen feet away. It was walking quietly, but seeing us quickly flushed. This was the only time a bird came to the call silently, so we assumed it to be a female.

On April 10, a nest of this pigeon was found in the crotch of a good sized tree about 20 feet from the ground. It was made of twigs and contained fresh eggs. A day and a half was spent in trying to secure the bird, but she would not return while anyone was near the nest. On the second morning when flushed again from the nest she must have deserted it, since the eggs were found to be quite cold, late that afternoon.

All the specimens obtained were males.

Local names, *Montagnera*, *paloma colorada*.

***Pardirallus maculatus* Boddaert.**

Lagunillas, State of Merida, 1.

One specimen in Field Museum collection purchased from Briceño Gabaldon, Merida.

***Aramides cajanea* Müller.**

Rio Guachi, 2; Encontrados, 1; Empalado Savanna, 1.

Until such time as a comprehensive study can be made of geographic variation in this species, it seems advisable to refer these specimens to the typical form. They agree closely with specimens from Guiana and seem to indicate that the validity of *A. c. venezuelensis* (Cory, Field Mus. Pubs., Ornith. Ser., Vol. 1, p. 296, Feb. 23, 1915) may be open to question. The type of *venezuelensis*, taken in February, is in rather worn plumage and paler than our May specimens from Rio Guachi, which are in fresh plumage and only slightly, if at all, paler than Guiana material. In these specimens, also, the brownish color of the occiput does not extend forward more than in Guiana specimens. With larger series, it may be found that the Venezuela bird averages slightly paler on the underparts than typical *cajanya*, but as judged by available material, absolute identity of the birds from the two regions seems just as probable. Chapman (Dist. Bird Life in Col., p. 217, 1917) has noted slight color variations in wood rails from Colombia and it is evident that further work on the group would be desirable.

The first specimen taken was shot May 2 from its nest which was situated in a tussock of mixed growth at the edge of the river bank in heavy forest. So close to the water was the nest that the canoe in passing almost touched it and one of the paddlers standing in the stern distinguished the incubating bird which at a greater distance would scarcely have been detected. The nest contained five eggs very heavily incubated. The second specimen, taken May 3, was a female also, and contained large eggs without shells. Near the mouth of Rio Guachi several other wood rails were seen in mangroves and other overhanging vegetation at the water's edge. They were very shy, never appearing in the open, but skulking about among roots and low bushes.

Local name, *Caracolera*.

**Porzana carolina** Linnaeus.

Rio Aurare, 1 (Jan. 25); Merida, 2 (Oct. 28-29); Culata, 2 (Nov. 2-11).

Five specimens in Field Museum collected from October to January seem to indicate that the species is a winter resident in the region.

**Porzana albicollis** Vieillot.

Catatumbo River (near Encontrados), 1.

One specimen in Field Museum collected by H. F. Raven.

**Neocrex erythrops** Sclater.

Valle, Rio Mucujon, near Merida, 1.

One specimen in Field Museum purchased from Briceño Gabaldon.

**Gallinula chloropus galeata** Lichtenstein.

Lagunillas, 1; Rio Aurare, 1.

The name *galeata* applies to the gallinule of southern Brazil, while the bird from the Cauca Valley, Colombia, said to have a shorter wing, has been separated under the name *Gallinula chloropus pauxilla* (Bangs, Proc. N. E. Zool. Club, V, p. 96, 1915). On geographic grounds, therefore, our bird might be expected to agree with *pauxilla*, but as judged by wing measurements alone, such is not the case. Its wing measures 179 mm. in length and even exceeds Brazilian birds for which Bangs gives measurements of two specimens as 172 mm. and 174 mm., respectively. Moreover, a series of eleven specimens in the Field Museum taken at Lake Valencia, Venezuela shows a variation in wing length from 150 mm. to 183 mm., this wide range apparently being due to the fact that many are worn birds with frayed or partly moulted primaries. Our bird is in fresh plumage with perfect flight feathers. We have not seen the type series of *pauxilla*, nor Brazilian specimens of *galeata*, but it is evident that whatever may be the case with Colombian birds, the Venezuelan specimens above referred to cannot be separated from *galeata* on the basis of wing length.

This gallinule was common on the laguna at Lagunillas. Together with *Ionornis martinicus*, it was found feeding in flocks on the water plants floating on the surface. The birds seemed little afraid of a boat, running off to one side and commencing to feed again as soon as we had passed.

Local name, *Gallineta*.



***Ionornis martinicus* Linnaeus.**

Lagunillas, 1.

A very common bird on the cienega at Lagunillas, where it outnumbered *Gallinula choropus galeata* about two to one. Wherever there were water plants floating on the surface, one was sure to see a number of these birds. Sometimes they were single, and again twenty or thirty birds, mixed *Ionornis* and *Gallinula*, would be seen scattered over a patch of water weeds. Birds in every stage of the immature plumage were seen. At this time, May 9th and 10th, nests were found which, from the appearance of the eggs, seemed to belong to this species and not to *Gallinula*. The nests were woven of rushes, about ten inches in diameter, and placed some two feet above the water among the stems of live rushes.

***Fulica caribaea* Ridgway.**

Lagunillas, 1.

The one specimen obtained is certainly not *F. americana*, but agrees with Ridgway's description of *F. caribaea*. It has a large elliptical frontal shield 18.5 mm. long and 11.5 mm. wide, which was white in life, but in the dried skin is pale brownish and much wrinkled. Comparison of this bird with West Indian specimens of *F. caribaea* in the Field Museum shows it to have a heavier bill, and larger feet. This is the first record of *F. caribaea* from the mainland, and it is possible that it will prove to represent a local race, but, with only one specimen, we hesitate to describe it as such. It was killed from a flock of about seven birds on the cienega of Lagunillas. The birds were not wild, and had the same habits as the American Coot.

Local name, *Pica plata*.***Belanopterus cayennensis* Gmelin.**

Rio Cogollo, 2; Catatumbo, 1.

Found in numbers on the savannas near the Rio Cogollo. They did not seem to be partial to water, but were found mostly on the open grassy savannas. Their habits were very similar to those of our common Killdeer Plover. They are very noisy birds.

***Himantopus mexicanus* Müller.**

Lagunillas, 1.

On May 9th a pair was seen and on May 10th three more.

**Neoglottis flavipes** Gmelin.

No specimens were taken, but the species was common about Altigracia in February. Several birds were seen also along the edge of a cienega near the Rio Cogollo.

**Tringa solitaria** Wilson.

Common in the vicinity of Altigracia the first part of February. In March one bird was seen by a small pond at an elevation of 12,000 ft. in the Culata Mountains.

**Actitis macularia** Linnaeus.

Seen in the vicinity of Altigracia February 10.

**Ereunetes pusillus** Linnaeus.

Lagunillas, 1.

A small flock of mixed *E. pusillus* and *P. fuscicollis* was seen May 10th.

**Tryngites subruficollis** Vieillot.

Lagunillas, 2.

Three Buff-breasted Sandpipers were found on the edge of the cienega at Lagunillas May 10th. The species was familiar to the natives, who called it *Patocito amarillo*.

**Pisobia minutilla** Vieillot.

Rio Cogollo, 1.

Common in suitable localities in the Tropical zone during the end of February and the first part of March.

**Pisobia fuscicollis** Vieillot.

Lagunillas, 1.

A mixed flock of *P. fuscicollis* and *E. pusillus* was seen at Lagunillas May 10th. Like other sandpipers, it is known locally as *Patocito* (little duck).

**Gallinago delicata** Ord.

Rio Cogollo, 2; Encontrados, 2; Colon, Tachira, 1.

Fairly abundant about marshy places near the Rio Cogollo during the last of February and first few days in March.

**Gallinago nobilis** Sclater.

Paramo de Tama, 4.

The only snipe seen in the Merida region was observed, but not secured, at Paramo Tambor April 15, and may have been of this species. Four specimens in Field Museum were taken Mch. 2-5, 1910 in an open grassy swamp at an elevation of about 7000 ft., on Paramo de Tama.

**Jacana nigra** Gmelin.

Rio Cogollo, 2; Catatumbo, 2; Maracaibo, 1; Encontrados, 4; Rio Aurare, 1.

All specimens from the Maracaibo region are in the maroon-backed phase called by Sclater *J. melanopygia*, but which Ridgway (Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus. No. 50, pt. VII, p. 16) considers a color phase of *J. nigra*.

Jacanas were common around a small cienega near the Rio Cogollo, and at Lagunillas, where they fairly swarmed. It seems significant that no birds of the black-backed phase were noted, although no special watch was kept for them.

**Oedicnemus bistriatus vocifer** L'Herminier.

Rio Cogollo, 2.

Seen only on the savannas near the Rio Cogollo where they were found in pairs scattered over the open country. During the heat of the day, they sought the shade of some low tree. In the city of Maracaibo these birds are often kept as pets around the houses or in the stores because of their usefulness in keeping down cockroaches and such vermin. In the house next to the one in which we had our headquarters in Maracaibo, was one of these birds. Morning and evening its weird cry could be heard consisting of a succession of short sharp notes, starting slowly and gradually decreasing the intervals until they could not be distinguished. It sounded like a very fair imitation of the exhaust of a motor boat, beginning slowly and gradually increasing in speed.

The two specimens were taken on February 16, the female containing very large eggs without shells.

Local name, *Alcaraban*.

**Aramus scolopaceus** Gmelin.

Lagunillas, 1; Catatumbo, 2.

This species was first seen at the mouth of the Rio Guachi, where

it inhabited the bushes along the river bank. It was rather shy. At Lagunillas a number were seen, and while common they could not be called plentiful. They were seen out on the marsh feeding on the mud flats, and also among the bushes bordering the canal which connects the cienega of Lagunillas with Lake Maracaibo.

Local name, *Carao*.

**Chauna chavaria** Linnaeus.

Encontrados, 4.

No specimens of this species were preserved, but it was very plentiful about the cienega of Lagunillas. Here it could be seen in pairs and flocks of ten or more scattered over the marsh. It was breeding during the first part of May, several nests being found containing from two to seven soiled white eggs. The nests were simply large masses of rushes built up from the water and hidden back in the marsh grass.

Local name, *Chicaguiri*.

**Palamedea cornuta** Linnaeus.

This bird was not seen by us, but the natives at Lagunillas spoke of a second species of screamer, which was to be found around the edges of the cienega. A number of specimens are in the Field Museum from the lower Catatumbo River where the species was observed to be very abundant in 1910.

Local name, *Camuco*.

**Cairina moschata** Linnaeus.

Lagunillas, 1.

Seen at Lagunillas and at the mouth of the Rio Guachi. In the former locality it was very plentiful. On the cienega of Lagunillas during the first part of May, the Muscovies appeared to be nesting. Very few females were seen and on one occasion when a hen was killed the drake that accompanied her was very loath to leave. These ducks did not frequent the larger stretches of open water, but spent their time in the small pot holes back in the grass. Their habits in this respect were very similar to those of mallards, and very fine sport was to be obtained by jumping them from the grass. In spite of their large size, they were very adept at sneaking, more than one cripple being lost in the thick grass.

Native names, *Pato*, *Pato Real*.

**Dendrocygna viduata** Linnaeus.

Merida, 1.

No wild birds were found, but in the vicinity of Merida, where several captives were seen, the natives say this species appears in large numbers during May. It must be food which attracts them, as no water except in swift mountain streams is to be found in that vicinity nearer than about thirty-five miles. At Lagunillas, the natives spoke of these birds being found, and described them accurately. However, at the beginning of May, they appeared to have left as none were seen.

Local name, *Guaridi*.

**Dendrocygna bicolor** Vieillot.

Lagunillas (Zulia), 1; Rio Aurare, 1.

In his "Distribution and Migration of North American Ducks, Geese and Swans," Cooke says of this duck "questionable records appear from Venezuela and the Island of Trinidad." Also, in the last A.O.U. check-list, the South American range of *D. bicolor* is given as southern Uruguay and Argentina. It seems well, therefore, to call attention to the fact that the range of this duck also includes northern South America. Chapman (Distribution of Bird-Life in Colombia) found it more or less common in the Tropical zone of Colombia, and there is a specimen from British Guiana in the Field Museum.

During our two day stay at Lagunillas in the first part of May, *D. bicolor* was found to be rather common on the large cienega. Hundreds of tree ducks were seen, about one in twenty of which were the Fulvous, the remainder Gray-breasted. Each species flocked by itself, although having similar habits, but *D. bicolor* was much the shyer bird. This duck was easily distinguishable by its light rump and was well known to the native hunters.

Local names, *Llaguasa colorada*, *Alazana*.

**Dendrocygna discolor** Sclater & Salvin.

Rio Cogollo, 6.

First seen on a small cienega near the Rio Cogollo. Here a flock of about thirty were found, the birds refusing to leave even after being much disturbed. At this time of year (the end of February) about half were in the immature plumage, having pale breasts and dark bills and feet. On the large cienega at Lagunillas there were thousands of tree ducks, about ninety-five per cent of which were *D. discolor*, the remainder *D. bicolor*. While not allowing a close approach when

resting on the water, these ducks when flying seemed to have little fear of a boat, often swinging by within easy gun shot. This is probably due to the fact that native hunters rarely waste powder on flying birds. At the time of our visit here, May 9-10, all the tree ducks appeared to be in mature plumage. While flying they keep up an incessant whistling.

Local names, *Llaguasa*, *Pisisi*.

***Nettion andium* Sclater & Salvin.**

Culata Mts., 4.

Eight of these ducks were seen on two small lakes on the Paramo San Antonio of the Culata Mountains, at an elevation of 12,200 and 12,300 feet, respectively. A flock of six were so tame, and appeared so loath to fly that at first they were thought to be young birds that had not yet gained the use of their wings. In fact, two of them could not be forced into the air, but sneaked under some bushes overhanging the water, where all efforts to dislodge them proved futile. These mountain lakes contained very little vegetation, and dropped off into deep water within a foot or so of shore. One would scarcely expect to find shoal water ducks in such places and it appears that these teal must obtain their food along the banks. According to the natives they breed on the paramo in August.

***Querquedula discors* Linnaeus.**

Rio Cogollo, 1.

On the first of March a flock of about twenty Blue-winged Teal was seen on a small cienega near the Rio Cogollo. They were very wild, leaving the locality at the first shot, although a flock of *Dendrocygna discolor* remained after much shooting. Later, while in Merida, we were shown about ten live *Q. discors*, which had been trapped on a small pond near the edge of the town. The owner stated that these teal were found in that vicinity every winter, which seems peculiar, as the country is not suited to waterfowl, its only water being a swift mountain stream, and perhaps one or two artificial ponds.

***Marila nationi* Sclater & Salvin.**

Lagunillas, Zulia, 3.

This species, originally described from Lima, Peru, was recently rediscovered by Chapman in Colombia where it was found to be common in the marshes of the Cauca Valley near Cali. It is interesting, therefore, to record it from the Maracaibo region at tide level. Comparison with specimens kindly loaned by the American Museum of

Natural History shows the Colombian and Venezuelan birds to be identical. Hence the species is not confined to the Pacific coast and comparison with fresh Peruvian material would be desirable.

These ducks were fairly common on the large cienega at Lagunillas. At the time of our stay during the first part of May, only single birds were seen, no flocks being encountered. These single birds, however, did not associate with the masked ducks or tree ducks which were very numerous, but kept by themselves in the more open stretches of the marsh. No females were taken or seen which probably means that at this season the birds were nesting.

### **Nomonyx dominicus** Linnaeus.

Rio Cogollo, 2.

The masked duck was first seen on a small cienega at the edge of the savanna near Rio Cogollo. Here on March 1st, two males in the immature plumage were taken. These birds were very tame, allowing one to approach within about fifteen yards.

Later at Lagunillas in the early part of May, these ducks were very plentiful, occurring in flocks of ten to twenty. They spent their time in the open patches of water among the lily pads, but would not allow a boat to approach closer than about fifty yards before flying off a short way and again alighting. A few males were seen in full plumage but about nineteen out of twenty birds were in the hen plumage. Next to *Dendrocygna discolor* this was the most common duck on the large cienega at Lagunillas.

Local names, *Patocito*, *Buza*.

### **Merganetta columbiana** Des Murs.

Laguna de Pan de Azucar, 1; Rio Alba, 1.

Indefinite reports of the Torrent Duck were received from natives, but the bird itself was not observed although many suitable localities for it were visited. Its occurrence in the region is attested by two specimens now in the Conover collection, obtained through W. F. H. Rosenberg and collected by natives for Briceño Gabaldon and Sons.















